



INSTRUCTIONS FOR REQUESTING A U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) SECRETARIAL DISASTER DESIGNATION

Agricultural disasters caused by drought, flood, fire, freeze, winds, and other calamities substantially affect farmers and ranchers throughout California every year. The following sequence of events provides information for requesting a USDA Secretarial designation.

Each county should determine which entity (e.g., Board of Supervisors, County Emergency Services Manager, or County Agricultural Commissioner's Office) has the lead in coordinating a request for a USDA Secretarial designation. A local proclamation of an emergency is not required to request an USDA Secretarial designation; therefore, the Board of Supervisors' involvement in this procedure will differ from county to county. However, each county should establish a coordination plan to ensure that the applicable parties are aware of the situation.

- A natural disaster causes severe physical property or production losses adversely affecting local farmers, ranchers, and/or aquaculturists.
- The county (typically the County Agricultural Commissioner) informs the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) of the situation. The Cal EMA Individual Assistance (IA) Branch will provide the county with a copy of the *California County Agricultural Commissioner Disaster Report* form, technical assistance, and follow up with any request for assistance, if necessary.
- The county has 60 days from the end of the incident to request a USDA disaster designation through Cal EMA.
- The county submits a letter to the Secretary of Cal EMA requesting the state to pursue a USDA disaster designation on behalf of the county, including a completed *California County Agricultural Commissioner Disaster Report* form(s).
- Cal EMA IA Branch will review the request and coordinate with the USDA State Office.
- If damage estimates warrant a request to USDA, Cal EMA will compose a letter to the USDA Secretary of Agriculture requesting implementation of the Emergency Loan Program.
- The Secretary of Cal EMA, as the Governor's designee, must submit the request to USDA no later than three (3) months from the end of the incident.
- The USDA Secretary's office notifies the USDA State Office in Davis of the request and asks for a Loss Assessment Report (LAR).



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- USDA State office requests the local Farm Services Agency (FSA) office, in conjunction with the Agricultural Commissioner, to complete the LAR.
- FSA will work with local USDA agencies and other federal, state, and local agricultural agencies, as appropriate, to conduct an assessment of crop and production losses to complete the LAR.
- The LAR is submitted to the State FSA office. State FSA will review the LAR and then make a recommendation to the USDA Secretary.
- The USDA Secretary will either approve or deny the request and notify the State.
- Cal EMA will notify the County Board of Supervisors, County OES, and County Agricultural Commissioner of the decision.
- If the request is approved, the county FSA office notifies farmers, ranchers, and aquaculturists of the availability of the emergency loans and any other USDA assistance that may be available.